Assassinations Probe Showdown Deferred

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Showdown over the future of a congressional probe of the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. was delayed indefinitely yesterday as a result of a committee chairman's illness.

Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), chairman of the House Assassinations Committee, phoned from his San Antonio home to say he had the flu and was calling off a scheduled meeting of the controversial committee.

This left unresolved a confrontation between Gonzalez and the 11 other committee members over whether former Philadelphia prosecutor Richard Sprague would remain as chief counsel and staff director for the committee's investigations.

Gonzalez ordered Sprague fired Feb. 10, but the 11 other committee members told Sprague to ignore him.

With Gonzalez ailing, there were no plans by any members to hold a rump session to decide next steps. No new date was set for a formal meeting.